



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

ICE IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT INITIATIVES

About ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) strengthens national security and upholds public safety by closing down homeland security vulnerabilities. Created in March 2003, ICE was tasked with closing down our nation's vulnerabilities by targeting the people, money and materials that support terrorism and other criminal activities. ICE prioritizes its immigration enforcement actions by targeting the greatest national security and public safety threats -- an approach not taken prior to 9/11.

National Security

Prior to 9/11, immigration authorities were not widely recognized or used as an effective counter-terrorism tool in the United States. The 9/11 Commission Report noted that several of the 9/11 hijackers could have been detected and removed if routine immigration violations had been enforced by the former INS. Today, ICE has created a host of new systems to better address national security threats and detect potential terrorist activities in the U.S.

- **Compliance Enforcement Unit** – Several of the 9/11 hijackers and the 1993 World Trade Center bombers violated the terms of their visas to embed themselves in America. To address this threat, ICE established the Compliance Enforcement Unit in June 2003 to detect, track, and prioritize for arrest visa violators and other immigration status violators that pose national security or public safety threats. To date, this unit has arrested more than 2,081 high-risk visa violators nationwide.
- **Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs)** – ICE has dramatically increased its presence on the JTTFs to the point where ICE is now the second-largest federal contributor of agents to these task forces. ICE brings extensive immigration and customs expertise to the JTTFs. In the past two fiscal years, the number of ICE probes under the auspices of the JTTFs has jumped 500 percent, from some 300 to 1,500 investigations.
- **Critical Infrastructure / Worksite Enforcement** – ICE has placed an increased priority on targeting illegal workers who have gained access to critical infrastructure worksites around the country - including nuclear plants, chemical plants, U.S. military installations, airports, and seaports. The number of these ICE investigations has increased from 465 to 511 from fiscal year 2004 to fiscal year 2005, while the number of criminal indictments increased from 67 to 188 during the same period.
- **Document and Benefits Fraud Task Forces** – Ramzi Yousef, the mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing committed asylum fraud to enter and embed himself in America. To address this threat, ICE created the Identity & Benefits Fraud Unit in September 2003 to work closely with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to identify fraudulent immigration benefit applications and target violators. The number of investigations launched by this unit increased from 2,334 to 3,591 from fiscal year 2004 to fiscal year 2005. Criminal indictments increased from 767 to 1,052 during the same time period. In April, ICE created Document and Benefits Fraud Task Forces in 10 cities to bring investigators together from a variety of agencies with expertise in different aspects of document and benefit fraud. These agents will partner with U.S. Attorney's Offices to formulate a comprehensive approach in targeting criminal organizations behind these schemes and those who attempt to benefit from them.

Border Security

ICE is taking a number of new approaches to address the problem of illegal immigration across the nation's borders. Since its creation, ICE has apprehended and removed an all-time record number of illegal aliens from the United States. At the same time, ICE is targeting the international criminal organizations responsible for smuggling and trafficking thousands of aliens across our borders – by dismantling their financial infrastructure for the first time and by disrupting these organizations both abroad and at home.

- **Secure Border Initiative / Expedited Removal** - Expedited Removal streamlines the processing and removal of non-Mexican illegal aliens. This policy permits aliens caught within 100 miles of the border who have spent less than 14 days in the U.S. to be removed without an immigration hearing. These efforts under the Secure Border Initiative have allowed ICE and CBP to reduce the total percentage of non-Mexican illegal aliens released into society by more than a third. The average length of stay in ICE detention before removal for aliens under Expedited Removal is approximately 21 days, down significantly from the average of 90 days spent in ICE detention in the traditional removal process. These statistics reflect a dramatically improved removal efficiency, which has allowed ICE to free up more bed space to detain and process even more aliens.

Since the launch of the Secure Border Initiative last September, ICE has detained and removed more than 17,500 non-Mexican aliens apprehended by the Border Patrol on the Southwest border under the Expedited Removal program. There are roughly 2,000 additional non-Mexican aliens currently in detention who are awaiting removal under the program. In total, ICE is removing roughly 99 percent of those who come into its custody under the Expedited Removal program. At the same time, ICE has been locating and adding additional bed space. ICE recently added 2,300 new beds, bringing its capacity up to roughly 20,800. Under the Administration's budget request, the total number of beds would increase to 27,500 in FY 2007 if approved by Congress.

- **Traditional Worksite Enforcement** – With the launch of the second phase of the Secure Border Initiative, ICE has initiated a strategic shift in the way it approaches employers that intentionally violate the law and knowingly hire illegal aliens by bringing criminal charges against them and seizing their illegally-derived assets -- rather than relying on the old tactic of administrative fines as sanctions. Last fiscal year, this new approach resulted in 127 criminal convictions, up from 46 the previous fiscal year. More employers are also being charged with money laundering violations, which can result in prison sentences of up to 20 years. Last year, a single ICE worksite enforcement investigation resulted in a settlement and forfeiture of \$15 million, an amount that represented the largest worksite enforcement penalty in U.S. history and surpassed the sum of all administrative fines from the previous eight years. ICE seeks to enhance its worksite enforcement investigations with proposed additional funding. The Administration's fiscal year 2007 budget request seeks \$41.7 million in new funds and 171 additional agents to enhance ICE's worksite enforcement efforts. Most recently, ICE brought criminal charges against seven current and former managers of the nation's largest pallet services company and arrested more than 1,000 of the company's illegal alien employees.
- **Targeting Human Smuggling / Trafficking Organizations & Their Profits** - ICE is taking new approaches to better combat criminal organizations that smuggle and traffic humans across our borders. Prior to the creation of ICE, there was no systemic effort by U.S. law enforcement to target the illegal profits of these organizations, which generate an estimated \$10 billion annually. For the first time, ICE is merging financial expertise of the former Customs Service with immigration expertise of the former INS to better combat these organizations. Over the past two fiscal years, ICE investigations into human trafficking and smuggling organizations have increased more than 30 percent from roughly 2,500 in FY 2004 to 3,300 in FY 2005. At the same time, the amount of assets seized in these cases has increased from roughly zero before ICE was created in March 2003 to roughly \$27 million in FY 2005.

- **ICE International Investigative Efforts** - ICE has more than 50 Attaché offices around the globe that work closely with foreign governments to target both human smuggling and trafficking organizations overseas. ICE has worked on a number of investigations with foreign governments that have closed down these criminal organizations overseas. By targeting these criminal organizations at their source, ICE can help prevent them from moving illegal aliens across our borders.
- **Illegal Alien Removals** – Since the beginning of FY 2004, ICE has removed more than 400,000 aliens; of those, more than 210,000 had criminal records.
- **Targeting Fugitives** – Since ICE's creation, ICE fugitive operations teams have arrested more than 44,000 illegal aliens, including 33,343 fugitives and 10,777 non-fugitives. Of these, more than 20,000 had criminal records.

Public Safety

Mandated by Congress, ICE has a significant public safety mission as part of its immigration enforcement efforts. For the first time, immigration authorities are being leveraged with other authorities to better target significant public safety threats to our communities, such as violent gang members and sexual offenders.

- **Operation Community Shield** - To address the problem of violent street gangs, ICE launched Operation Community Shield in February 2005. A key component of this initiative is the use of immigration authorities to arrest, prosecute and remove foreign gang members. To date, Operation Community Shield has resulted in the arrest of more than 2,721 gang members and associates in the U.S., including 55 gang leaders.
- **Operation Predator** - To address the problem of child sex offenders, ICE launched Operation Predator in July 2003. A key component of this initiative is the use of immigration authorities to arrest, prosecute and remove foreign child sex predators. To date, Operation Predator has resulted in the arrest of more than 7,900 child sex predators nationwide.